

King Hall 471

Chapter 471: One Finger Per Minute!

Young Master Wang's face, originally twisted with malice, triumph, contempt, and disgust, froze as soon as his subordinate uttered those words.

His expression became as changeable as the seasons, at times flushed, then pale, then dark again, as if he were a Sichuan opera face-changing performer, which made him look particularly ridiculous.

What the hell, we were just talking about Xiang Mantang battling for power in Dragon King Hall, too preoccupied to manage their own affairs, and now he decides to swing by for a visit!

Young Master Wang felt so angry he almost vomited blood.

But quickly, he suppressed the fear and anger churning inside him and hurriedly said to his subordinate, "Go out and tell him I am under the weather and not fit to receive visitors, ask him to come back another day."

"This..."

Upon hearing Young Master Wang's words, the subordinate's expression wavered with hesitation and reluctance, not daring to agree immediately.

After all, the Tiance True Dragon of the Dragon King Hall— even here beneath the skies of Capital City, where the emperor resides, was a figure of high authority. If he wanted to visit the Wang Family, even the Family Head, Wang Changege, would have to drop everything and hurry back to receive him.

And there was Young Master Wang, a third generation Wang Family Member, trying to tell him to come back another time. If Xiang Mantang were to sense anything amiss, it could very well be planting seeds of disaster for the Wang Family!

And most importantly, the reason the subordinate looked so flustered when he came in to notify Young Master Wang wasn't due to the terrifying status of Xiang Mantang, that left him panic-stricken...

It was because Xiang Mantang didn't bother to wait for notification; he had simply barged in!

Which meant, Xiang Mantang was about to enter.

Sure enough,

as the subordinate was preparing to explain the situation to Young Master Wang,

"Oh? Under the weather, to come back another day? But from what I see, you don't look too ill. Or maybe, since I know a little bit of the Qihuang Technique, would you like me to check on you?"

Xiang Mantang's chilling voice suddenly rose just outside the room.

"Ah?!"

Upon hearing Xiang Mantang's voice, Young Master Wang couldn't help but shiver uncontrollably.

He then glared at his subordinate, so filled with rage he wished he could tear him to pieces!

Dammit, this was setting him up. The man was already making himself at home and here was his subordinate, dawdling about with his message, letting Xiang Mantang hear any hint of avoidance!

There was no time for Young Master Wang to react, as the entryway resounded with a series of crisp footsteps.

"Dadada..."

Soon, under Young Master Wang's gaze—full of terror and helplessness—Xiang Mantang, draped in a black fox-fur overcoat and wearing military boots, strode in.

"Dragon... Dragon King..." Young Master Wang, looking at Xiang Mantang, forced an uglier smile than a cry, "What wind has blown you to our door? Are you here for my father? I'll call him straight away..."

As he spoke, Young Master Wang reached for his pocket, only to realize in a flash that he had smashed his cell phone just moments ago. A fine sweat broke out on his forehead, and he hurriedly explained, "Sorry, sorry, the phone's broken, I'll go to my room to get..."

"No need!"

Xiang Mantang's emotionless voice interrupted, freezing Young Master Wang in his tracks.

Tense and rigid, Young Master Wang then turned back to offer a woeful smile, somewhat at a loss.

Xiang Mantang slowly walked toward him, saying, "I'll call your father later to inform him to come over, but before that, since your hands seems quite shaky, let me have a look at them!"

"Don't..." Before Young Master Wang could finish his refusal, he saw a black shadow flash before his eyes.

Then, he realized that his wrist was now in the hands of Xiang Mantang.

Next, as Xiang Mantang held his wrist, he flashed a dazzling smile with gleaming teeth, which sent a disturbing chill through Young Master Wang. Just as a sense of foreboding rose in him, Xiang Mantang applied force to his hand!

"Crack crack crack..."

"Ah!!"

The first sound was the noise of Young Master Wang's tendons and bones being displaced.

The latter, like the squeal of a slaughtered pig, was naturally Young Master Wang's scream of agony.

Xiang Mantang listened to Young Master Wang's howls indifferently and continued to apply the Bone Shattering Hand technique!

In the end, after Xiang Mantang had gone over Young Master Wang's entire body with the Bone Shattering Hand, he nonchalantly released his grip.

"Hehe..."

Young Master Wang lay prostrate on the ground, his body constantly spasming and twitching, his expression one of unbearable pain. His clothes were long soaked with cold sweat, and before long, the marble floor was also smeared with a puddle of his sweat right where he lay!

Xiang Mantang looked down at Young Master Wang writhing in the puddle like a leech and repeatedly apologized, "Oh dear, I'm so sorry, Young Master Wang. It seems my medical skills are still no match for my senior brother's. It's truly embarrassing for you."

Though his tone was full of apology, if Young Master Wang had looked up, he would have seen that Xiang Mantang's expression was icy cold, with no sign of an actual apology.

With his eyes glazing over, Young Master Wang gasped for breath while lying on the ground, completely unable to lift his head to look at Xiang Mantang's face or listen to what he was saying.

He felt that death would be preferable to living at this moment; he would rather die than continue to endure such excruciating torment.

Seeing this, Xiang Mantang lost interest in toying with him. He stepped directly on Young Master Wang's head and then took out his cellphone to call Wang Changge.

"Beep beep beep..."

The call connected quickly.

Wang Changge's voice, tinged with panic and reverence, answered, "Hello, Dragon King?"

Xiang Mantang felt somewhat helpless; he didn't consider himself the Tiance True Dragon of the Dragon King Hall, but these people seemed to have decided Mu Jinyu was beyond saving and that he was the new Tiance True Dragon. They kept calling him Dragon King, which irritated him...

Xiang Mantang said, "Stop calling me Dragon King. I'm already at your Wang Family's place. Have your people arrived yet?"

Xiang Mantang knew that even though Young Master Wang hadn't called Wang Changge, and his own call to Wang Changge had just been made, Wang Changge must have already received the message that he was coming.

After all, he had made his way there without any attempt to hide, and the numerous members of the Wang Family, upon seeing him arrive, must have secretly called Wang Changge already.

"I'll be there shortly, Dragon King. Please wait a moment..." Wang Changge said.

"Fine, I'll wait for you. One minute, one finger," Xiang Mantang replied indifferently.

"This..." Wang Changge still wanted to ask what Xiang Mantang meant, but Xiang Mantang had already hung up the phone.

Afterward, Xiang Mantang casually sat down, picked up a fruit knife from the coffee table, and began to peel an apple for himself.

He was quick, peeling the apple in just over ten seconds. Then he munched on the apple, timing the minutes, all the while fiddling with the fruit knife in his hand.

A minute had passed.

Wang Changge had still not arrived.

Impatience showed on Xiang Mantang's face, followed by a swift cut.

In the puddle in front of Young Master Wang, a splash of red quickly spread, accompanied by a severed finger.

However, Young Master Wang, already tormented to his limits and still feeling the effects of the Bone Shattering Hand, barely registered the pain of losing a finger.

Instead, he became stubbornly silent, not making a sound.

In the following minutes,

Xiang Mantang would casually help Young Master Wang lose a finger every minute until after ten minutes had passed, Wang Changge hurried over, and Xiang Mantang stopped the act of cutting off toes.

"Finally back, huh?" Xiang Mantang said to Wang Changge with a raised eyebrow and a smile, as if greeting a good friend.

Chapter 472: Debt Collection!

Wang Changge listened to the greeting from Xiang Mantang, looked at the ten severed fingers on the ground, a pool of bloodstains, and his son writhing in uncontrollable convulsions. Far from anger or vital energy surging in his heart, a bone-chilling fear instead crept over him.

"You, you, you..."

He lifted a hand pointing at Xiang Mantang, his face wearing an expression of sheer terror. Yet, because he was afraid of Xiang Mantang, he had to force a smile, which only made his expression more sinister.

Xiang Mantang glanced down at Young Master Wang and then looked up at Wang Changge with a smile, "What's the matter? You arrived quite promptly. I haven't even chopped off his toes yet, don't worry..."

"Dragon King, what do you mean by this?!"

Wang Changge's face looked even uglier than crying. It was his most beloved child; even when he acted recklessly last time, wanting to stand up for Young Master Zhou and his group, which ended up incurring a hundred billion in debt for the Wang Family, he hadn't punished him. Yet today, he had been so severely crippled by Xiang Mantang.

Although the surgery to reattach limbs is now very advanced, the dexterity of the reattached fingers would definitely be much worse than before!

Wang Changge began to regret why he had listened to Young Master Wang's words before, to delay a few days and test Su Zijin and their reaction.

He had been possessed then, actually agreeing to it.

Were Xiang Mantang and his people so easy to test?

Just this one test brought unbearable consequences to Young Master Wang!

Xiang Mantang, looking at Wang Changge's reaction, found it rather dull. He casually tossed aside the fruit knife in his hand, and said indifferently, "Alright, no more joking around. Now that Head of the Wang Family has returned, we can start discussing. The hundred billion you owe my senior brother, when exactly do you plan to repay it?"

No more joking around?

This act of chopping off Young Master Wang's ten fingers was just a joke to you?

When Wang Changge heard Xiang Mantang's words, his breath caught, feeling that Xiang Mantang had become even more terrifying since Mu Jinyu's incident.

At least in the past, during the few encounters he had with Xiang Mantang, he wasn't like this.

"Hmm?!"

While Wang Changge was dazed, Xiang Mantang let out a displeased snort.

Wang Changge jolted back to his senses, his lips quivering as he hurriedly explained, "I... I've already prepared one billion, which was originally meant to repay the Su Family. It was just delayed by an incident, and I forgot..."

"Oh, you forgot along with the other three families?" Xiang Mantang looked at Wang Changge with a semblance of a smile.

No sooner had he finished speaking than his expression abruptly turned stern, devoid of any hint of amusement, and he said coldly, "Furthermore, I remember it was a hundred billion in debt, not repaying one billion per month. Do you think the words of the Dragon King are to be taken lightly?!"

"Dare not, dare not..." Wang Changge shook his head hastily, his tone even carrying a hint of a cry, "It's just that I really can't come up with a hundred billion right away. To do so, we'd have to liquidate many assets, so we negotiated with Lady Su to repay it gradually... Lady Su, she agreed to it..."

"Godmother is soft-hearted; it's normal for her to agree to your unreasonable requests, but I'm different, I'm not so easily deceived!!"

Xiang Mantang showed no consideration for Wang Changge's feelings, "If you can't get that much money all at once, then just sell all the Wang Family's immovable properties together. Can't you scrape together a hundred billion?!"

Wang Changge, with a bitter face, wanted to say that if they did this, the Wang Family would likely suffer a great loss. Moreover, with the waters of Capital City running deep, others would take the chance to suppress them, and the Wang Family might lose its position as a leading affluent family.

However, Xiang Mantang's next move cut off Wang Changge's words before they could leave his throat, and he had to forcibly swallow them back down.

"Click!"

Xiang Mantang rose to his feet, his boot pressing down on the head of Young Master Wang, who twitched slightly and frothed at the mouth as if seized by a fit of epilepsy. Then, exerting force, a crisp snap resounded, and a pool of crimson and white substance oozed out from under his boot!

Upon witnessing this scene, Wang Changge's eyes burst with an incredible horror.

He had never imagined that, before he could even clarify things with Xiang Mantang, Xiang Mantang would kill his son just like that.

During their last conflict in the teahouse, even when swords were drawn and crossbows aimed, Mu Jinyu and the others had not killed anyone directly!

But now, to think that Xiang Mantang actually...

In an instant, a surge of fury born of losing his son welled up in Wang Changge's chest, nearly driving him insane, ready to fight Xiang Mantang to the death.

But Xiang Mantang's next words were like a bucket of cold water poured over his head, instantly stopping him from acting rashly.

As he spoke, Xiang Mantang lifted his foot and began to wipe the dirt clinging to the sole of his combat boot on the tailor-made, handcrafted expensive suit that Young Master Wang wore, quickly cleaning off the filth.

"Repay a billion in a month, right? Well... it's not that I can't agree, but there should always be interest, right? Just take it as one life, but I'm really not sure if the Wang Family has a hundred core members, does it?"

Wang Changge instantly crumbled, "I will repay it, I'll repay it! I'll raise the money right now to repay you!"

Xiang Mantang's combat boot rubbed a few more times on the corpse of Young Master Wang, making sure it was clean of contaminants, before he leisurely said, "Oh, you have money to repay now? Fine, but you're not paying me; you're paying my godmother, Lady Su!"

"I know, I know!" Wang Changge was terrified, nodding ceaselessly like a pecking chicken.

Even with his immense power in the Capital City, he was still just an ordinary person who had seen quite a bit of slaughter but had never encountered someone as terrifying as this.

He knew that Xiang Mantang's spirit was likely disturbed now, and if he, together with the Zhou Family, the Wang Family, and the Li Family continued to play tricks on him, they would probably end up with their heads rolling on the ground.

If an ordinary person had gone mad and sought revenge on him, Wang Changge wouldn't care at all, easily capable of dealing with the situation.

But the person who had gone mad was Xiang Mantang, a powerhouse of the Martial God Realm, presiding over the Dragon King Hall; he wouldn't dare defy him.

Even if he had to impoverish his entire family, he would have to quickly gather the funds to repay the ten-billion debt to Su Zijin!

"That's good to hear. Hopefully, next month, I won't have to make a special trip."

Seeing Wang Changge's compliance, Xiang Mantang looked up at him with a radiant smile and then, with hands behind his back, slowly walked out the door.

Wang Changege watched as Xiang Mantang exited the hall, the oppressive silence in his heart finally beginning to dissipate slightly; he heaved a long sigh of relief, and with a plunk, collapsed weakly onto the ground, sobbing uncontrollably.

Yet at this time, his heart dared not harbor even the slightest thought of retaliation against Xiang Mantang.

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After leaving the Wang Family, Xiang Mantang got in his carriage and went to the Zhou Family, the Li Family, and the King Family, paying a visit to each.

At the Zhou Family, when Xiang Mantang arrived, they were still uninformed, which caused Xiang Mantang quite a bit of trouble before he could get his hands on the remaining ninety billion debt and transfer it to Su Zijin.

The Li Family and the Wang Family, on the other hand, had already heard of the Dragon King coming to collect debts by the time Xiang Mantang visited; their Family Heads had returned home early and were well-prepared for his arrival.

As soon as Xiang Mantang arrived, they immediately and obediently handed over the money they owed, presenting it with both hands.

Chapter 473:

Nearly forty billion yuan in debt was repaid, and Xiang Mantang soon received a call from Su Zijin.

She, too, was surprised—how had Xiang Mantang managed to make these people obediently repay their debts, even including the interest?

However, Su Zijin didn't ask further, as she could vaguely guess what Xiang Mantang had done to them; behind this, there must have been bloodshed and killing...

Thus, she asked Xiang Mantang if there might be any trouble and wanted to share half of the money with Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang straightforwardly rejected Su Zijin's idea of sharing the money and told her that there was nothing to worry about, not to think too much.

Afterwards, he hung up the phone.

While driving, Gao Yu hesitated, then said to Xiang Mantang, "Dragon King, there was a minor issue at Jinyu Group recently, but it's already been resolved. You might want to take a look."

"Oh? What kind of minor issue?" Xiang Mantang casually asked. Not waiting for Gao Yu to organize his answer, he took out his mobile phone and searched for news about the Jinyu Group.

Initially, Xiang Mantang saw that Mu Jinyu's company was being slandered, his face darkened, preparing to deal harshly with those ignorant people.

But soon after, seeing the latest news and the solutions by Gu Xiyan, the gloom on his face dissipated, and he watched with a hint of satisfaction as the sharp and prominent Gu Xiyan appeared in the video.

The original Gu Xiyan had been somewhat immature in character, depending more on Mu Jinyu; now, she had matured a lot, silently resolving troubles on her own.

It was good news.

Xiang Mantang was still somewhat worried about Gu Xiyan and the others, fearing that one day he would go to the Kunlun Ruins to search for the Treasure Medicine that could save Mu Jinyu, possibly turning the Kunlun Ruins upside-down and maybe not being able to return. What would happen to Mu Jinyu's family then?

Hence, Xiang Mantang had always restrained himself, not directly rushing into the Kunlun Ruins to cause trouble but instead cultivating loyal followers in Dragon King Hall so that, even if he did not return, Gu Xiyan and the others would be taken care of.

'Perhaps, I can quicken the pace now. If I really can't find the medicine to save my senior brother on Earth, I should go to the Kunlun Ruins soon.'

Xiang Mantang thought silently, and if he didn't return, he could entrust Dragon King Hall to Jian Ruyan's control.

With her character, she wouldn't disregard Su Zijin and Gu Xiyan.

After all, they were the relatives of the previous two Dragon Kings.

"Screech!!"

Just then, while still driving steadily, the car suddenly braked hard, abruptly interrupting Xiang Mantang's thoughts.

"What happened?!"

Xiang Mantang sat firmly in his seat, frowning as he asked.

With his skills, he naturally wouldn't be thrown about by the sudden stop, but irritation was definitely present.

With a slightly panicked tone, Gao Yu answered, "Just now an old man suddenly ran onto the road ahead, I noticed him and braked urgently, but I still hit him."

He was somewhat worried, not knowing if the old man who had suddenly appeared had been run over by the wheels and killed.

"Let's go down and check!"

Hearing Gao Yu's words, Xiang Mantang responded with a tone tinged with reproach and anger, "I've told you to pay attention while driving. If someone is killed, you handle it yourself!"

After saying this, he opened the door and stepped out.

Upon exiting the car, Xiang Mantang momentarily froze.

The road surface bore no marks of someone being run over by tires, no horrifying streaks of blood scattered about.

Instead, an elderly man in a Taoist robe was lying quietly on the ground, the upper half of his body still pinned by a tire, his face blackened with tire marks, as if the tire had just rolled over his face.

But...

How had that not crushed his head?!

What kind of person is this?!

Seeing this scene, Xiang Mantang immediately understood—the old man was certainly no ordinary person.

"What are you looking at? Hurry up and pull this old man out!"

While Xiang Mantang was somewhat stunned, the old man lifted his arm and waved it a few times toward Xiang Mantang, shouting.

"Holy shit, you're still alive?"

Gao Yu also got out from the driver's seat and, seeing the old man in such a state, was so shocked that his eyeballs almost fell out of their sockets. Hearing the old man's words, he couldn't help but curse loudly.

"Stop the chatter and help lift the car."

Xiang Mantang frowned and instructed Gao Yu.

"Alright!"

Gao Yu glanced warily at the dancing old man, then went over and forcefully lifted the car.

"Ahhh... much better..."

Without the car wheel pressing on his chest and belly, the old man felt much more comfortable, muttered a sentence, and then wriggled like a caterpillar on the spot, successfully freeing himself from under the car.

"Bang!"

As soon as Gao Yu saw the old man crawl out, he let go, allowing the car to fall back to the ground.

After that, he stepped back a few steps and stood protectively in front of Xiang Mantang, his eyes warily watching the old man.

It was somewhat plausible for an old man to survive a car hit, but for his face to be rolled over several times by the car wheels without dying wasn't something a normal person could endure.

And how could such a person get hit by his car?

Clearly, he came prepared and intentionally targeted Xiang Mantang.

This was no ordinary scamming old man.

And the scam wasn't for money, but for another purpose.

The old man ignored Gao Yu's guarded look, lifted his arm, and wiped his face with a dirty sleeve, smearing the dark tire marks across his face, making it even dirtier and darker.

Then, he took out a pair of sunglasses from his pocket, put them on, coughed lightly a few times, and turned to Xiang Mantang, saying, "Let's talk about how you're going to compensate me."

Xiang Mantang's eyes flickered as he asked, "What do you want compensation for?"

The old man irritably said, "Nonsense, of course it's money. You've hit me like this, and without ten thousand yuan, I won't let you go today!"

"It doesn't look like you're hurt," Xiang Mantang said calmly. "Besides, you crashed into my car yourself, and I can check the dashcam."

The old man: "..."

Silently for a moment, the old man then spat out a mouthful of bright red blood and weakly said, "I... have an internal injury, stop your nonsense. Either pay up today, give me five thousand yuan, or... I'll die right in front of you!"

With that, he lay down stiffly on the ground.

His body occasionally twitched a few times.

He seemed really gravely injured.

Gao Yu: "..."

Xiang Mantang felt speechless too.

What kind of person was this? Clearly, he was so strong, yet he was pretending to be dead in front of them for the sake of five or ten thousand yuan. They didn't have the demeanor of a great person at all. Didn't it degrade his value?

Luckily, this road wasn't very busy; otherwise, being harassed by the old man, Xiang Mantang himself would feel embarrassed.

"Enough, enough, get up, I'll give you five thousand yuan," Xiang Mantang said somewhat impatiently.

Of course, he didn't believe that the old man was only there for a mere five thousand yuan to trouble him. There must be another reason. He decided to wait and see.

Chapter 474: Test Characters, Jade!

Hearing Xiang Mantang's words, the old man who had previously been lying on the ground, his body twitching, suddenly jumped up high from the ground.

He wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth with his dirty sleeve, complaining yet sounding delighted, "Why didn't you just pay up earlier, making me spit blood?"

After speaking, he held out his hand to Xiang Mantang, "Here, give me the money."

Naturally, Xiang Mantang didn't carry cash on him—he gestured with his lips towards Gao Yu.

Gao Yu also wasn't in the habit of carrying cash, but he had money in WeChat.

So, he asked the old man, "Can you do QR code payment?"

"Of course." The old man nodded proudly, then pulled out the latest iPhone from his pocket, opened his WeChat QR code, and extended the screen towards Gao Yu, "Here, scan it."

Gao Yu was speechless. This scamming old fellow was actually keeping up with the times, even using QR codes to receive money.

Speechless though he was, Gao Yu still held a wary respect for this crazy yet unfathomably powerful old man, so he quickly made a transfer via QR code, sending over five thousand yuan.

Seeing the notification of the received money, the old man's eyes narrowed into crescent moon shapes with delight.

Holding his phone, he couldn't stop smiling, "Sure enough, the prophecy of today wasn't wrong. Although I encountered a bloody mishap, I also made an unexpected fortune."

Having said that, the old man was ready to leave with his phone in hand.

However, he paused for some reason, then turned back to look at Xiang Mantang, hesitated for a moment, and said, "Seeing how honest you look, I'll give you a free fortune-telling today. What would you like to know?"

"No need." Xiang Mantang shook his head in refusal.

If this had been a person of the Path, Xiang Mantang would naturally not have refused, and would even have begged him to calculate how to obtain the thing that could revive Mu Jinyu.

But with this old man's frivolous demeanour, who was scamming for five thousand yuan, it was clear he wouldn't be of any help. It was best to get rid of him quickly.

The old man, upon hearing Xiang Mantang's refusal, immediately glared, dissatisfied, "What? You look down on me? You should know that I'm the Divine Diviner, missing nothing. This morning, I predicted I'd encounter a bloody mishap as well as make a fortune. See, hasn't it all been verified?"

Gao Yu was speechless to the extreme.

He finally couldn't help but say, "That 'bloody mishap' of yours, wasn't it self-inflicted? And the 'fortune' you mentioned, wasn't it just swindling us?"

"Yes." The old man nodded frankly, not at all embarrassed, "My actions are to attract good luck and avoid disaster. A minor car accident is better than a bloody death, right? The bit of fortune I received may be small, but I'm still alive, isn't that good for everyone?"

"We got scammed by you, how is that good for us?" Gao Yu said discontentedly.

If it weren't for the old man's unpredictable strength, he would have felt an urge to beat him up.

Of course, Gao Yu also noticed that although the old man was full of nonsense, he was quite easy to talk to. If not for the terrifying strength the old man had displayed earlier, he would never dare to speak to him in this manner.

The old man said, "You also benefited from a misfortune by getting advice from me. Isn't that good too?"

While saying that, he huffed discontentedly, "You should know that ordinary people, even if they spend billions, wouldn't be qualified to have me read their fortune."

By the end, the old man looked at Xiang Mantang meaningfully, his words lingering, "You should cherish this blessing!"

"Gao Yu, let's not bother with him anymore, let's go," Xiang Mantang said impatiently, wanting to leave directly without further contact with the madman who behaved oddly at every turn.

Just as they returned to the car, a cement truck suddenly lost control at the intersection behind them, barreling into pedestrians crossing the road on a green light, crushing them under its weight.

The scene was too horrific to watch as people were ground into a bloody paste!

"This..."

Xiang Mantang, sitting in the backseat of the car, watched the accident at the intersection unfold in an instant, his pupils involuntarily constricting.

He suddenly remembered what the old man had just said, "Being hit and bleeding a little is far better than being completely obliterated, isn't it?"

The sum I received, though small, at least allowed me to stay alive.

To begin with, Xiang Mantang thought the old man was talking nonsense, but now, watching the accident, he felt that there was indeed some truth in his words.

If he had been an ordinary person, aware that a bloodbath was imminent, he might have sought to attract good fortune and avoid disaster by intentionally getting hit by someone in a minor collision, which certainly would be better than being crushed to death by a cement truck, right?

And although the compensation for the minor collision might not be much, it wouldn't compare to the latter, but at least he would still be alive!

The old man stood on the side, watching the accident unfold, his expression somewhat dazed. He then wiped the cold sweat from his forehead in relief and muttered, "My goodness, it really did keep disaster at bay. If I had been run over by that truck, my frail body wouldn't have stood a chance."

Although Xiang Mantang felt that the old man, with his strength, would likely have survived being hit by the cement truck unexpectedly, his attitude had changed. He humbly asked, "Old man, how do you divine a fortune?"

"It's simple," said the old man, coming back to reality after hearing Xiang Mantang's words, indifferent to the accident and the screams nearby, proudly telling Xiang Mantang, "Just give me a word, and I'll be able to divine for you."

As he spoke, he mumbled, "Actually, it wasn't supposed to be that complicated, but I couldn't clearly see your face because it's shrouded in a layer of fog, so I need you to give me a word."

Xiang Mantang, surprised by the old man's words, had thought he would be refused with mockery or asked for an exorbitant price.

After all, he had just turned down the old man's offer of a free fortune, and he thought that if he changed his mind, the old man would take the opportunity to gouge him. But to his surprise, the old man readily agreed to tell his fortune.

It felt as though the old man had intentionally come to divine his fortune.

With that thought, Xiang Mantang still spoke a word, saying, "Jade."

"What jade?" asked the old man.

Xiang Mantang replied, "The jade of a Jade Pendant."

Upon hearing this, the old man nodded and began to calculate by counting on his fingers. As he did so, his expression grew more serious.

Then, he murmured, "The word for jade, minus the dot, becomes the word for king. This person is born to be a king, destined to shine brilliantly. Unfortunately, that missing dot signifies a calamity in his fate, which could well mean it's better to shatter as jade than remain intact as a tile!"

Muttering to himself, the old man turned to Xiang Mantang and asked, "You're not divining this for yourself, are you? It's for someone else, right?"

"Why would you ask that?" Xiang Mantang inquired.

The old man said dismissively, "Because you're still alive and well, whereas the person I've divined for, if not dead, should be at his last breath by now. He certainly couldn't be standing in front of me talking. So it's obvious you're divining for someone else..."

Chapter 475:

Xiang Mantang and Gao Yu exchanged a glance upon hearing the old man's words.

Xiang Mantang didn't continue to say much.

He began to suspect the old man's purpose in approaching him.

After all, given the strength that he had just demonstrated, it was clear he had the kind of connections that reached the level of Dragon King Hall, and naturally would be aware of Mu Jinyu's current predicament.

So, did he deliberately utter those preceding words, just to catch his attention?

Although thinking this way, considering Mu Jinyu's current condition, Xiang Mantang ultimately couldn't help but ask, "Then, is there any way to save him?"

The old man said, "He is barely hanging on to a breath, not completely lifeless, which means he has essentially survived this trial. Without any action on your part, he will gradually awaken."

Xiang Mantang didn't believe his words and directly asked, "How long will that process take?"

"That I do not know." The old man shook his head and said, "After all, his fate is too exalted to grasp, enshrouded in purple aura, enveloped by dragon qi. When he might awaken is uncertain, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps next year; it depends on fate..."

Gao Yu murmured softly, "Isn't that a useless thing to say?"

Xiang Mantang frowned, then asked again, "But if I want to speed up this process, is there a way to do it?"

"There is." The old man nodded unhesitatingly, "However, it's very difficult, virtually impossible, and also very dangerous."

"Tell me, I want to try," said Xiang Mantang.

"Alright." The old man nodded, then began to calculate by counting on his fingers, "To hasten this process, where the east rises and the west sets, at the extreme point of reversal, the location should be in the west..."

The old man calculated for several minutes, muttering various enigmatic phrases, then suddenly his eyes lit up, and he said, "Got it, I've calculated it. In the west, near Ancient Babylon, if you're lucky, you may find the entrance to the Garden of Eden. If you enter and obtain the fruit of the Tree of Life, the person you wish to save can awaken ahead of time."

"Garden of Eden?" Xiang Mantang repeated with a frown.

In the Bible, the Garden of Eden is described as being in the east, but since they of Huaxia were themselves situated at the very eastern edge, it was understandable that the old man had deduced a location in the west.

And according to his recollection, in the Garden of Eden, there are legends of two forbidden fruits. One is the fruit that imparts knowledge of good and evil, also called the fruit of wisdom, which, according to legend, was secretly consumed by Adam and Eve, thus awakening their spiritual wisdom.

The second is the fruit of the Tree of Life, named the Fruit of Life.

It is said that those who eat it gain eternal life and can live forever, which is why God, fearing Adam and Eve after eating the fruit of wisdom, would then take the fruit from the Tree of Life, expelled them from the Garden of Eden. And at the east of the Garden of Eden, He placed a Cherub and a sword that turned in every direction with flaming fire to guard the path to the Tree of Life.

A Cherub refers to a Wisdom Angel, in the Old Testament described as winged divine beings, obedient to God.

As for the old man saying that with good luck one could find the entrance to the Garden of Eden, that is not hard to understand, given that after the cataclysmic flood, the entrance to the Garden of Eden was said to have disappeared.

As Xiang Mantang understood it, the Garden of Eden, like the Kunlun Ruins, should be camouflaged within the Earth's realm, belonging to a folded space.

However, if one could find the entrance, it would still be possible to come and go freely.

"Yes, hope lies on that Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden," the old man nodded in agreement.

Xiang Mantang stared at the old man's dirty, sly face, eager to discern if he had any ulterior motives toward him.

Recalling the Tree of Life, Xiang Mantang suddenly thought of the principle of Withered Tree Quest for Spring, the pursuit of the Fountain of Youth, the Elixir of Immortality...

This talk from the old man, wasn't it very similar?

Could he be a new genetically modified person sent by Withered Tree Quest for Spring, hence able to withstand the crushing of his car, then play tricks and attempt to hoodwink him into finding the Elixir for them?

Xiang Mantang was truly suspicious.

However, if this message came from Withered Tree Quest for Spring, it was after all a glimmer of hope, the hope of reviving Mu Jinyu—even if it meant being used by people from Withered Tree Quest for Spring, he did not care.

"Fine, I will give it a try," Xiang Mantang decided to head to Babylon after pondering for a while, seeking the lost Garden of Eden.

Seeing Xiang Mantang set on going, the elderly man hurriedly shouted, "That place is extremely dangerous! I advise you not to go. Your friend will awaken sooner or later, it won't take many years, so why take the risk?!"

"Dangerous? No matter, if it is truly dangerous, I will withdraw and leave," Xiang Mantang shook his head.

He said so, but Xiang Mantang did not take it too seriously.

After all, on Earth now, there wasn't any place he couldn't easily venture into.

There weren't many who could threaten him either.

In fact, back when he was at the peak of Energy Transformation, there weren't many who could hurt him. If it weren't for Chen Qianqian's sake, he would never have been injured, nor would he have fallen into a predicament that required Mu Jinyu to risk her life to save him.

And this time, with no ties holding him back, even if he did encounter some great terror, with his cultivation at the God Realm level, he should be able to easily extricate himself and leave.

The old man could see that Xiang Mantang was not taking his words to heart, and he became worried. So he spoke again, "Never mind, let me give you one more free divination. Say another word, and I will divine the auspices of your journey for you."

"Another word?" When Xiang Mantang heard the old man's words, his mind did not think of Mu Jinyu, but Jian Ruyan.

After all, his journey to find the lost Garden of Eden, while seemingly unconcerned, could still hold unexpected dangers. If he never returned, he would definitely need to entrust Dragon King Hall to someone he trusted.

So, he had been thinking just a moment ago that he should find Jian Ruyan first to explain things before setting off for Babylon.

Thus, upon hearing the old man's words, Jian Ruyan naturally came to mind for Xiang Mantang.

Therefore, Xiang Mantang blurted out, "Sword..."

"Sword?" The old man heard Xiang Mantang's words and, without waiting for the additional words "Ruyan," began calculating with his fingers.

After a few calculations, the elderly man's expression drastically changed as he repeatedly exclaimed, "Don't go, don't go, this journey is too perilous! The sword is an omen of violence; not only are you unlikely to obtain the Fruit of Life, but you might also lose your life, possibly even triggering a disastrous war!"

Xiang Mantang started to doubt whether the old man was from Withered Tree Quest for Spring.

"Trust me." Seeing the skeptical look in Xiang Mantang's eyes, the old man immediately took out a token from his pocket and handed it to Xiang Mantang to see.

The token was made of a special material, not gold, jade, or wood, and was engraved with complex, mysterious patterns. On the front, a pair of eerie eyes seemed to be truly embedded in the token.

On the back, four characters were inscribed:

[Omniscient]

Upon seeing this token, Xiang Mantang's expression changed.

It turned out that the old man was not from Withered Tree Quest for Spring but from the world's largest intelligence organization, Omniscient.

Omniscient, an intelligence organization Xiang Mantang had previously introduced to Mu Jinyu, was rumored to have a Heavenly Eye that nothing in the world could hide from.

They knew all the truths in the world and could predict future events.

Dragon King Hall had once cooperated with Omniscient during the Old Dragon King's era, but after the Old Dragon King's death, Xiang Mantang, helping Mu Jinyu manage Dragon King Hall, had been unable to find their active presence, let alone cooperate.

Therefore, when Xiang Mantang was looking for Withered Tree Quest for Spring, that was why he had been so passive, unable to find the backer behind them, only able to follow the trail to the former Beidou Tianshu, knowing he was a high-level member of Withered Tree Quest for Spring.

Unexpectedly, now that Mu Jinyu had an accident, and he truly took control of the Dragon King Hall, someone from Omniscient appeared again.

Chapter 476 The sky is changing!

"Trust me,"

the old man said sincerely, holding the Omniscient Token, as he spoke to Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang's gaze flickered indecisively, her train of thought interrupted, her face immediately grew cold, and she said sternly, "Since you're a person 'Omniscient', surely there's no reason for you not to be aware of my identity. All that you've just told me; are you playing me?!"

Xiang Mantang was referring to the old man's jade-character divination and the guidance he provided for her to go to Babylon in search of the Garden of Eden.

"No, I did not play you," the old man shook his head. "I am aware of your identity, but my recent divination was not done to lead you on using Dragon King's information. The results are indeed as such. The subsequent calculation that this trip would be extremely dangerous is also true. Otherwise, I would not have revealed my identity to get you to trust me."

"So, what was your 'Omniscient' purpose in coming to find me? Was it to make me stop, to wait calmly for my senior brother to wake up, or was it to guide me to find the Garden of Eden?"

Xiang Mantang didn't believe the old man's words, her tone coldly skeptical.

The old man answered, "The purpose was to make you stop, as your current efforts to find the Dragon King's resuscitation method are causing the world to descend into chaos, severely affecting the overall situation. That's why I specifically came to help you find a method."

"And the Dragon King does not need rescue; he can recover on his own if you just wait. I was not aware of this initially—it was the result deduced from the jade characters you mentioned, not a deception. And the divination regarding the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden is genuine; it can indeed accelerate the Dragon King's recovery time. I just did not expect that your journey there would trigger an unprecedented disaster of warfare!"

As the old man explained, there was endless frustration and regret in his voice.

If he had known that giving Xiang Mantang the divination results would lead to such a significant disturbance, one that hadn't been seen in a millennium, he, being 'Omniscient', would rather watch Xiang Mantang pursue the people from Withered Tree Quest for Spring, use Slaughter Redemption, and search chaotically for treasure medicine across the world.

He would not have shared the divination results with Xiang Mantang.

Alas, now that Xiang Mantang knew, whether she would go there to explore was unpredictable.

The old man could only hope that Xiang Mantang would be someone open to advice.

Listening to the old man's explanation, Xiang Mantang's eyes shimmered, uncertain whether he was telling the truth or deceiving her.

Anyway, she was not about to easily trust this guy.

An 'Omniscient' person coming to her, offering to help awaken Mu Jinyu out of goodwill? She found it hard to believe anything he said.

There must be more to it.

However, the perils of the Garden of Eden and its interior were likely real. It was a result beyond their 'Omniscient' expectations, compelling the old man to disclose his identity.

So...

Should she make the trip?

Seeing that his words had no effect on Xiang Mantang, the old man knew that she no longer had much trust in him. After a moment, an idea struck him, and he said to Xiang Mantang:

"Dragon King, did your senior brother ever tell you about what he encountered in the Hundred Thousand Great Mountains of Miao Zombie while searching for the Spring of Life for the Old Dragon King?"

Xiang Mantang's eyes showed a flicker of movement, and then she burst out a streak of sharp brightness, saying, "Are you talking about Lin Qingxue and the esteemed person she encountered?!"

Mu Jinyu had indeed told her about the incidents encountered in the Hundred Thousand Great Mountains of Miao Zombie.

At that moment, he had guessed that the learned person who guided Lin Qingxue, telling her to head to Miaojiang's Hundred Thousand Great Mountains where she would receive the aid of a noble person and resolve the Lin Family's crisis, was very likely the Omniscient one.

Only the Omniscient could know that Mu Jinyu would get the clue to the Spring of Life from the Withered Tree Quest for Spring, and that he would go to the Hundred Thousand Great Mountains in search of the Spring of Life to extend the life of the Old Dragon King, thus able to guide Lin Qingxue to find someone.

The old man nodded and said, "Yes, in fact, it was also our guidance that led the Withered Tree Quest for Spring to find Mu Jinyu, and then conveniently let Jinyu get the clue to the Spring of Life. Our original intention was to help extend the life of the Old Dragon King..."

"As for Lin Qingxue, it was also to give you a reminder, to take notice of our Withered Tree Quest for Spring, consider it a trial, perhaps? If you could find us, it would prove that we could continue to cooperate. However, it seems you don't really care much about us..."

With that, he sighed deeply and continued, "Unfortunately, man's calculations are no match for heaven's. In the end, the Old Dragon King and Cain perished together, and from that moment, the course of the world, the future changes, began to gradually escape our control."

Xiang Mantang said, "So, you specifically came to me this time, to prevent me from causing chaos everywhere. You came to predict my future, then tell me that even if I don't do anything, my senior brother would still awaken. And if I don't believe it and want to accelerate this awakening process, you would help me find out where to get the Treasure Medicine that could awaken my senior brother?"

"That's right." The old man saw that Xiang Mantang was gradually clarifying his thoughts and nodded somewhat gratified, "We, the Omniscient, have no malice towards you. Everything we do is just to maintain the order and rules of the world."

Xiang Mantang said, "So, after realizing that if I go there, it would lead to even more unpredictable outcomes, you hope that I would not act rashly, is that it? But the matter about the Garden of Eden is real?"

"Hmm?" The old man listened to Xiang Mantang's words and slowly felt that something was amiss.

Initially, he thought that after talking to him about Lin Qingxue's matter, he would calm down and not think about acting rashly. But listening to his words now, it seemed...

Did he want to be even more reckless?

Xiang Mantang looked at the old man's expression and muttered to himself, "So it's true..."

"Originally, I was hesitating about whether there was any conspiracy behind your guiding me to find the Garden of Eden and whether I should go. Now, I have decided to go!"

Xiang Mantang's tone was calm, but it carried a trace of madness.

"What?!" The old man's heart sank, and he urged further, "I'm not deceiving you, our predictions as the Omniscient are basically infallible. Your senior brother will awaken on his own, and if you insist on searching for the Garden of Eden, it may trigger a result that no one can bear!"

"Basically infallible, but haven't there been mistakes made?" Xiang Mantang wouldn't listen to the old man, "The Old Dragon King and Cain died together, isn't that beyond your control?"

"If I follow your advice, remain inactive, and just wait for my senior brother to awaken on his own, what if your prediction is wrong, and he never wakes up at all?"

Xiang Mantang looked at the old man with cold eyes, his tone resolute and emphatic:

"Fate is not just waited for! Rather than trust your vague and elusive predictions, I prefer to fight for a path to life on my own!"

After saying this, Xiang Mantang ignored the old man's persuasion, got into his carriage, and sped toward the headquarters of the Dragon King Hall.

The old man stood rooted to the spot, taking a while to regain his composure. He looked in the direction Xiang Mantang had left, then lifted his head to gaze at the sky.

The sky was dark, as though it was going to rain.

It gave off a very oppressive feeling.

The old man exhaled and mused, "Perhaps, he is not wrong. The world has long since surpassed our imagination, the Omniscient are no longer omniscient, and it looks like the sky is about to change too!"

Chapter 477: You Must Come Back Alive!

Suburbs of the capital city, Dragon King Hall headquarters.

"Boom!"

Accompanied by a thunderous roar, dazzling white lightning streaked across the sky, and a dense drizzle began to fall from the heavens.

It was raining.

Xiang Mantang exited the car without opening an umbrella, but as the torrential rain neared him, it was automatically diverted by an invisible Qi Force.

Gao Yu, who had come out with an umbrella, watched this spectacle with great envy.

Leaving Gao Yu to handle his tasks, Xiang Mantang walked back to his office to start boiling water for tea.

"Knock knock."

Just as Xiang Mantang finished preparing the tea, a knock sounded at the door.

"Come in," Xiang Mantang said without looking up and continued making tea.

The door opened, and a subtle and serene fragrance wafted in.

"Is there something you need?"

A cool voice rose beside him.

Xiang Mantang turned his head and glanced at Jian Ruyan's pale cheek, still as expressionless as ever.

"Take a seat, have some tea first," Xiang Mantang motioned to the chair across from him, and then poured a cup of tea for Jian Ruyan.

"Are you troubled by something?" Jian Ruyan took the tea from Xiang Mantang, sipped it lightly, then furrowed her brows and asked.

Xiang Mantang was accustomed to not letting his emotions show. Unless disturbed by something that could unsettle his state of mind, most people would be unable to discern his thoughts from the subtle expressions on his face.

However, the tea ceremony is about soothing the emotions and cultivating the temperament, allowing one's state of mind to be elevated through the processes of washing the tea, brewing, sealing the pot, dividing cups, distributing tea, offering tea, smelling the fragrance, and tasting – as if one's spirit becomes diffused with the tea's aroma, merging with the universe, ascending to a state of "selflessness."

The drinker, too, can experience that serene, tranquil, and unforced intent domain.

The cup of tea that Xiang Mantang handed over, however, was far from his usual standard; the tea was bitter and hard to drink, which made Jian Ruyan instantly realize that Xiang Mantang was preoccupied with something.

And it was a significant matter that greatly affected him.

Hearing Jian Ruyan's words, Xiang Mantang was taken aback, then looked up into her sparkling eyes, smiled faintly, and said, "You saw through me."

"What is it that you wanted to see me about?" Jian Ruyan asked directly, not beating around the bush with Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang didn't speak but took a sip of the tea, found it indeed very bad, and understood why Jian Ruyan had noticed right away.

With a wry smile, Xiang Mantang put down his cup, spread his palms flat on his knees, and looking at Jian Ruyan, said, "I have a favor to ask of you, and I hope you can agree."

"What is it?" Jian Ruyan furrowed her brows, not committing to agree to his request outright.

Xiang Mantang sighed lightly and spoke indifferently, "I'm planning to go out on a trip, I've heard it's quite dangerous, and the chances of returning are low. If I don't come back, the affairs of Dragon King Hall will fall to you. I hope you can take care of my senior brother and his family..."

"I don't want to!" Jian Ruyan immediately refused, "Let Mu Hongchen do it for you, I want to accompany you on this trip!"

"Don't be rash, there's no need for you to do this," Xiang Mantang said calmly, listening to Jian Ruyan's words, his expression unchanged, showing no sign of surprise or emotion.

He had already guessed that Jian Ruyan would answer like this.

Therefore, he had a way to respond and knew how to persuade her.

Xiang Mantang rested both hands on the table, calmly gazing at Jian Ruyan, and said softly, "Firstly, though it's dangerous there, it doesn't mean I will certainly encounter misfortune. After all, I am now a Dan Warrior, a character among Terrestrial Immortals. I'm only telling you this in case something happens..."

"Secondly, if it really is very dangerous and I can't return, your coming with me would just add another life to the risk, which is completely meaningless. And what's more important is, do you really think it's realistic for Mu Hongchen to take over and manage the Dragon King Hall?"

Xiang Mantang said softly, "Mu Hongchen might have the ability, but she lacks the strength. If we both have accidents over there, with her power, she absolutely cannot hold down the Dragon King Hall or protect the land of the Divine Continent. It would be easy for enemies to invade!" [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NOvelFire.net](#)

"So, I can only ask you to bear this burden," Xiang Mantang sighed.

"I..." Jian Ruyan pursed her lips, still expressionless, but her originally bright eyes had dimmed, revealing a complex and entangled look.

Clearly, she did not want to take on the responsibility for the greater good, to bear the heavy duty of Dragon King Hall. She only wanted to protect Xiang Mantang.

"Help me with this, will you? You don't want me to leave with regrets, do you?" Xiang Mantang looked at Jian Ruyan, heaving a slight sigh as he spoke.

Although saying this was somewhat taking advantage of Jian Ruyan's inexplicable feelings for him, to coerce her into helping him, Xiang Mantang really had no other choice. If not for Jian Ruyan, the only other person who could take up the mantle after his departure was Wu Shisan.

Wu Shisan, although raised by the Old Dragon King and almost like an adopted son, had never been involved in the corruption with Shen Cangsheng and the others, but Xiang Mantang still had some doubts about trusting him.

"I..." Jian Ruyan's delicate body trembled slightly, showing the endless struggle and unwillingness in her heart.

In the end, under Xiang Mantang's pleading gaze, she finally let out a sigh and said, "I understand. I will definitely protect the Dragon King Hall!"

"Thank you."

Hearing Jian Ruyan's response, Xiang Mantang felt relieved. If Jian Ruyan had refused, then he really would have had no choice but to entrust the duty to Wu Shisan.

Now, with this solution, it seemed like the best possible outcome, and he could go to Babylon to search for the lost Garden of Eden, to find the legendary Tree of Life with more confidence.

Afterward, Xiang Mantang went into detail with Jian Ruyan about some of the internal operations of the Dragon King Hall. These were things Jian Ruyan was already aware of, but she had never paid attention to them before.

Therefore, he had to remind Jian Ruyan once again.

Jian Ruyan listened absent-mindedly, her expression filled with loss.

After Xiang Mantang finished speaking, he said softly, "Alright, these are the points to note. There's nothing else. If you encounter any problems you can't figure out on your own, you can discuss them more with Hongchen. I'm going to head out now. Take care of your health. During this period I'm gone, I'll leave the Dragon King Hall in your hands until I return."

Jian Ruyan also stood up, reluctant to see him leave.

Xiang Mantang glanced at Jian Ruyan then turned and walked towards the door.

Jian Ruyan bit her lip, finally took a deep breath, walked over, and hugged Xiang Mantang tightly, resting her head gently against his back.

Xiang Mantang's body tensed suddenly and then relaxed. Without turning his head, he spoke in a carefree and casual tone, "Ruyan, don't make it seem like a life-or-death separation. I'm not going to my death. I'm just going to check out the situation. If it's not doable, I won't just throw my life away..."

Jian Ruyan rested her head on Xiang Mantang's sturdy back, her eyes vacant and helpless. She didn't listen to what he was saying, but whispered softly, "Cousin, I really don't want you to take risks. Even though it's a selfish wish and you don't like hearing it, I truly... don't want you to gamble with your life..."

Her voice lacked the usual coolness and indifference, carrying only helplessness and sorrow, like a lost little girl unable to find her way home.

Xiang Mantang stood still, listening to Jian Ruyan's whispers, feeling an inexplicable sense of familiarity. It wasn't the voice, nor the words but rather the tone of her voice that seemed eerily familiar...

"You must come back alive, or else I will never forgive you for the rest of my life!" Jian Ruyan murmured and, finally letting go, pushed Xiang Mantang away.

Chapter 478 Paradise Lost and Garden of Eden

Xiang Mantang had just felt something was amiss when Jian Ruyan pushed him away.

He turned around, wanting to see what was wrong with Jian Ruyan.

"Bang!"

The door was directly closed by Jian Ruyan.

Xiang Mantang's nose almost got hit by the door; seeing this, he touched his nose with a resigned expression, while the familiar feeling he originally had disappeared with this interruption.

He simply thought Jian Ruyan was being petulant.

After all, no matter how cold and mature Jian Ruyan appeared, she was in the end just a girl of eighteen or nineteen. Her churlish behavior due to his obstinacy, not wanting to pay him much attention, was quite normal.

"Sigh..." Xiang Mantang let out a light sigh, standing at the door and called out to the inside, "I will come back alive to see you..."

Having said that, Xiang Mantang turned decisively and left the corridor without any further delay, quickly departing.

...

In the room.

Jian Ruyan leaned against the door, hearing Xiang Mantang's promise, her body gradually weakened and slowly slid down from the door.

In the end, she curled up at the door, her arms wrapped around her chest, her complexion pale, tears already covering her cheeks.

'Why is it always like this? Ever since I was a child, you always stood in front of me, shielding me from the wind and rain, protecting me...'

'I really hope that I can hold my own, become your support, stand side by side with you, protect you, but I'm too clumsy, still unable to step into the Innate Realm...'

'They must be running out of patience too, I don't know what exactly they want to do, why they are willing to let me out to see you, but I can't warn you, nor dare to acknowledge you, otherwise they will...'

After a while of messy thoughts, Jian Ruyan's eyes.

Shifted from helpless softness back to determination and resoluteness.

She got up from the ground, took a piece of tissue paper to wipe away the tear stains on her face, moved to the window with graceful steps, and looked out over the training ground at the sight of Xiang Mantang getting into the car and slowly moving away.

"I won't let your expectations down. While you're not here, Dragon King Hall will be guarded by me!"

...

Xiang Mantang didn't know what Jian Ruyan had thought after he left.

After leaving the headquarters of Dragon King Hall, he went to the sanatorium to visit Mu Jinyu again.

Entering the room, Xiang Mantang stood in front of the ice coffin, carefully observing Mu Jinyu's complexion, noticing that it was still rosy and healthy, but without any vital energy.

This time, Xiang Mantang didn't just look for a while and leave. He stayed in the room, talking to Mu Jinyu for three days.

But over these three days, he didn't see any signs of Mu Jinyu waking up.

"Indeed, the so-called 'quietly waiting for you to wake up' is ultimately just a joke. Maybe I'm too impatient, I really can't keep waiting without hope, I'd rather take a risk!"

Xiang Mantang looked at Mu Jinyu's sleeping face, sighed deeply, and after giving Mu Jinyu's face a deep look, he turned and walked out with long strides.

After leaving the sanatorium.

Xiang Mantang got into the car that had been waiting silently to the side and said to Gao Yu, "Let's go, to the airport."

"Yes," Gao Yu responded, and then took Xiang Mantang to the airport.

The Babylon that Xiang Mantang was headed to was one of the Four Great Ancient Civilizations. However, it had long been destroyed in history, and strictly speaking, the place he was actually going to was not Babylon but the Mesopotamian Plain.

This plain is said to be the place where the world's first city was established, filled with the earliest epics, myths, pharmacopeias, farmer's almanacs, and so on, the cradle of human civilization....

But now, it is fraught with war and extremely dangerous.

Of course, this danger, for Xiang Mantang, didn't count for much.

Half a day later.

Xiang Mantang had arrived at this war-torn plain.

He didn't know where to start looking for the Garden of Eden that was lost with the great flood that ended the world, so he wandered around aimlessly for a while.

He visited the majestic Ancient Babylon City and then went to the Etemenanki Temple, which was said to have originally been the Tower of Babel reaching into the heavens.

Afterward, he also looked at the Hanging Gardens, one of the eight wonders of the world.

However, he didn't find the entrance to the Garden of Eden there either.

In the end, Xiang Mantang stood by the Tigris River, staring at the emerald-green flowing water, lost in thought.

He had been searching here for seven days.

But he hadn't found any clues.

This made him somewhat anxious.

"New Dragon King?!"

At that moment, a rough voice called out; it was obvious the speaker was not fluent in Chinese.

The absorbed Xiang Mantang immediately snapped back to reality, withdrew his gaze, and turned to look behind him.

There stood two men, one white and one black.

The one who had spoken was the white man.

"Who are you?"

Xiang Mantang was surprised that someone here recognized him and wondered if they were from Jinyu Mantang or some other organization.

"Let me introduce myself, my name is Barlow." The white man introduced himself and pointed to the black man, saying, "His name is Leon."

After pausing for a moment, Barlow introduced them more formally: "We are from 'Paradise Lost'."

"People from Paradise Lost?!"

Xiang Mantang heard what the stranger said and his expression remained unchanged, yet his heart suddenly sped up a bit.

He had mentioned this organization to Mu Jinyu before, but even he wasn't clear about the true purpose of this mysterious group.

But now, having encountered them by the Tigris River, Xiang Mantang faintly guessed their intention.

Could Paradise Lost actually be in search of the lost Garden of Eden?!

He had not anticipated that both Omniscient, which had always been hidden in the shadows, and Paradise Lost, would emerge one after another during this period.

Now, only Heavenly Palace, Buddha's Light Shines Everywhere, and Way of Nature from the few organizations remained without any action.

However, Heavenly Palace was active around the Kunlun Ruins and didn't need much consideration; Buddha's Light Shines Everywhere and Way of Nature, these two great organizations, usually wouldn't get involved with the world, either living hidden lives in their various temples or undergoing training amidst the mortal world.

Xiang Mantang suddenly felt impatient, then he remembered that Fallen Splendor and Brilliant Divine Authority, which had been quiet during this time...

They couldn't be plotting something in the dark, could they?

During this period, he had been preoccupied with saving Mu Jinyu and hadn't paid much attention to them!

And then, Xiang Mantang recalled what the old man from Omniscient had told him, that his coming here was both an opportunity and a great crisis...

Was it going to come true with Paradise Lost?!

"Dragon King, are you here looking for the Garden of Eden as well?"

As various thoughts raced through Xiang Mantang's mind, Barlow spoke up and asked him.

"Hmm?" Xiang Mantang heard Barlow's words and snapped back to attention, no longer thinking about the great crisis. His gaze sharp as a hawk's, he looked sternly at Barlow and said in a firm voice, "Yes, is your group, Paradise Lost, always in search of the Garden of Eden?"

"Yes," Barlow nodded.

Knowing Xiang Mantang's purpose, he didn't show any hostility or unwelcoming attitude but invited him, saying, "We currently have some progress and know where the entrance to the Garden of Eden is."

Chapter 479: Testing and Bargaining!

"Oh, is that so?"

Xiang Mantang raised an eyebrow upon hearing Barlow's words, and said with a meaningful tone, "Since you have already made progress, why not go explore and instead come to find me? Are you hoping that I'll leave and not disturb your efforts?"

"Not at all," Barlow organized his thoughts, and slowly explained in his clumsy Chinese, "We didn't want to drive you away. It's just that our exploration, despite the breakthrough, is limited by our strength. As you know, the Garden of Eden is no idyllic paradise; it's full of dangers, and we're just ordinary people. Even if we could get in, we wouldn't be able to successfully harvest the fruits from the Tree of Life..."

Upon hearing this, Xiang Mantang scrutinized them carefully once again. Indeed, they were just ordinary people, at most slightly stronger than the average, akin to fitness trainers, athletes, or boxers - none of them were even Mingjin Warriors.

If such people truly found the entrance to the Garden of Eden and ventured inside, forget about the Tree of Life being guarded by the Divine Sword that can rotate and shoot flames in all directions, they would probably meet their end at the hands of the Wisdom Angel guarding the entrance.

However, why would Paradise Lost, one of the world's top ten organizations, not send more people after finding the Garden of Eden, allowing these ordinary folks to continue the exploration?

Or could it be that Paradise Lost comprised solely of ordinary people, without any martial artists or psychics?!

But that didn't make sense either. If the entire organization was merely ordinary people, how did they manage to become one of the top ten organizations in the world?

When Xiang Mantang posed this question aloud.

Barlow gave a wry smile and explained, "Our Paradise Lost is indeed an organization made up of ordinary people. We've always kept to ourselves, often willing to help others, and I don't know why we became one of the top ten. Maybe 'Nine Great Organizations' doesn't sound as good?"

Xiang Mantang still felt something was off.

But with scarce information about Paradise Lost, he couldn't just refuse to collaborate with them based on the slight unease he felt.

After all, they were the only ones who knew how to enter the Garden of Eden. Xiang Mantang himself might take years to find its entrance.

Wouldn't it be better for him to just not look and wait for Mu Jinyu to wake up on her own?

The man, who lacked patience, didn't fancy the idea of slowly figuring things out on his own.

As for these two, if they indeed harbored any ill intentions towards him or sought to use him somehow, they were only ordinary people after all. He could easily snuff them out without much concern.

Still, Xiang Mantang was not going to readily agree to their proposal, especially with some doubts still unanswered.

"Since you've found the entrance to the Garden of Eden but are only ordinary people yourselves, then why didn't you seek cooperation with Withered Tree Quest for Spring? With their principles, they would surely be willing to work with you!"

Xiang Mantang inquired.

Barlow candidly replied, "Withered Tree Quest for Spring is a pack of insatiable wolves, a bottomless dry well. If we were to collaborate with them, we might end up stripped to the bone."

Xiang Mantang thought about it and saw some truth in those words. The people of Withered Tree Quest for Spring were mostly those on the brink of death, with power enough to turn the tide and wealth enough to rival nations, but all of them were old. If they learned of the Tree of Life, they probably wouldn't leave anything for Paradise Lost.

With this in mind, Xiang Mantang's lips curled into a half-smile and looked at Barlow, "Oh? You fear Withered Tree Quest for Spring, but aren't you afraid that we from Dragon King Hall will devour you until not even a skin is left?"

"This..."

Barlow's face stiffened upon hearing Xiang Mantang's words.

Then, forcing a smile, he stuttered slightly, "I believe that Dragon King Hall would not do such a thing. One, because your need for the Fruit of Life isn't that great. Second, you Huaxia people are loyal and trustworthy, brave and upright, steadfast in your word..."

Xiang Mantang waved them off disinterestedly, saying impatiently, "Stop with the flattery, it's useless on me. After all, if the legend of the Tree of Life is true, then it represents immortal existence. Do you think its allure isn't great enough for me?!"

"This, this..."

Listening to Xiang Mantang, Barlow's face paled, cold sweat beaded on his forehead, and his lips quivered, at a loss for what to say.

By the looks of it, it seemed they deeply regretted coming to find Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang scrutinized their expressions carefully. Judging by the changes in their complexions, it seemed they were truly a bit slow-witted, never considering whether Dragon King Hall might be greedier than Withered Tree Quest for Spring!

Of course, it was also possible that they were acting kings, with acting skills so convincing that even he couldn't discern the truth.

The purpose was just to lower his guard.

Xiang Mantang speculated, but couldn't be certain of their true intentions.

But regardless, since he couldn't probe for answers, in the end, he would still have to visit the Garden of Eden.

"Forget it, I won't joke with you anymore. If we really can find the fruit from the Tree of Life, I'd only want..."

As he spoke, Xiang Mantang did a quick count. How many did he need in total?

Mu Jinyu needed one, Su Zijin, Gu Xiyan, Mei Yinxue, Wen Rou, they would inevitably need one each, that made five.

If he was coming all this way, he couldn't go back empty-handed, so he naturally wanted one for himself. Jian Ruyan had been so kind to him, he must get one for her too. Since he's giving one to Ruyan, Mu Hongchen, who worked tirelessly at Dragon King Hall, should also have one...

"I don't want much, just twenty!"

Xiang Mantang finally said.

Barlow and Leon's faces turned a bit green when they heard Xiang Mantang's words.

Damn it, you say you don't want much with twenty?

Who knew how many Fruits of Life there were on the Tree of Life that could grant eternal life?

What if there weren't even twenty?

How would they explain this to the high ranks of Paradise Lost?

"This... We..."

Barlow's face was deathly pale, struggling to speak, wanting to say something.

Xiang Mantang naturally saw what they wanted to say. They were obviously worried there weren't twenty Fruits of Life. He hesitated, afraid that they'd refuse to guide him if he fleeced them completely, so he said:

"Don't worry. I want twenty Fruits of Life, but that's if there are enough Fruits of Life. If there are only ten, I'll reduce the number I need. I'll take eight..."

"If there are only two or three, I want two, and you can take the remaining one back to settle things!"

"This..."

Barlow's expression remained hesitant upon hearing Xiang Mantang's words, not quite daring to agree.

After all, Xiang Mantang had previously said who knows whether his appetite could surpass Withered Tree Quest for Spring or not. What if, after he had guided them there, Xiang Mantang changed his mind? How could they possibly deal with him then?

Xiang Mantang noticed their concern and said in a stern voice, "Well? Don't you trust my character? If I had any crooked thoughts, why would I have laid it all out for you earlier? Could I not just wait until you've led me there and then go back on my word?"

"I may not count as a particularly good person, but at least, my word is my bond. Whatever I promise, I see it through."

"I've made myself clear. If you still don't trust me, then so be it. I'll find my own way there!"

Chapter 480:

Having heard Xiang Mantang say this,

Barlow hesitated, struggling with his expression. Finally, he clenched his teeth and said, "Fine, I agree to your terms. I hope you will keep your promise."

"Rest assured," Xiang Mantang replied indifferently. "A promise from a gentleman is beyond the chase of speedy horses!"

"Good, I hope we can have a pleasant cooperation."

Barlow gritted his teeth, then pulled out an ancient, ceramic mask from the backpack behind him and handed it to Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang glanced at it, his eyes expressing doubt, before finally taking it.

This ceramic-like mask was ice cold, with a firm texture and a bizarre style. It was adorned with many intricate and mysterious patterns as well as some cracks, looking quite ancient.

"What is this object?"

Holding the mask, Xiang Mantang inspected it over and over again. Unable to discern its purpose, he looked up at Barlow and inquired.

Barlow explained, "This is an artifact from the Sumerian era, possibly even older. Only by wearing it can one see the two lost rivers of the Garden of Eden."

Upon hearing Barlow's explanation, Xiang Mantang instantly understood.

He had done his research and preparation on his way here, having looked up quite a bit of information and knew that the Garden of Eden was fed by four major rivers, while the Mesopotamian Plain had only two. Thus, Ancient Babylon was also known as the civilization of the Two Rivers Basin.

Therefore, some scholars believed that the Garden of Eden was not in Babylon but elsewhere.

But if the other two rivers were hidden, vanishing into folded space, then all of it made sense.

Holding the heavy ceramic mask in his hands, Xiang Mantang asked, "Where did you get this from?"

Barlow responded somewhat proudly, "Found it in the Tigris River—it took us fifty years to finally discern the entrance to the Garden of Eden!"

"Is this the only mask?" Xiang Mantang asked.

"Yes." Barlow nodded, indicating that Xiang Mantang could try it on.

Xiang Mantang went silent for a moment, then handed the mask back to Barlow. "You wear it first."

"The Dragon King is indeed very cautious." Surprised by Xiang Mantang's words, Barlow chuckled lightly, took the mask, and put it directly on his face.

Xiang Mantang remained silent, saying nothing.

Better safe than sorry, he still strongly doubted their intention in approaching him, not willing to wear a mask brought to him without any precautions.

Barlow put on the mask, and no unusual incidents occurred. He prepared to take it off.

Just then, Xiang Mantang said, "Perhaps keep it on a little longer."

Barlow gave a few forced laughs and said nothing, nor did he dare to remove the mask, continuing to wear it.

Three minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, one hour.

As time slowly passed by,

almost three hours later,

Xiang Mantang, seeing that nothing happened, spoke, "You can take it off now."

"Phew..."

Upon hearing this, Barlow immediately breathed a sigh of relief, quickly took off the mask, and complained somewhat, "That was suffocating."

Xiang Mantang took the mask, wiped off the saliva, carefully disinfected it once more, and then put it on himself.

As soon as he put on the mask,

he immediately heard the sounds of the other two rivers flowing. He looked up, and in addition to The Euphrates River and the Tigris River, two more rivers appeared.

So, the Garden of Eden was truly here.

Xiang Mantang looked at the other two clear, unpolluted rivers and thought with some shock and amazement.

"Dragon King, do you see? We didn't deceive you, look, we are sincere,"

Barlow said, watching Xiang Mantang silently gaze upon the landscape.

"Hmm."

Xiang Mantang snapped back to his senses, acknowledged with a nod, took off his mask, and looked again toward where the rivers were supposed to be.

Sure enough, the riverbeds had disappeared.

All that was left was a desolate clearing.

"We have found the rivers, but how do we get into the Garden of Eden?" Xiang Mantang didn't put the mask back on and asked Barlow.

Barlow replied, "According to our speculation, you should just follow those two rivers straight ahead, and you will reach the Garden of Eden. Of course, we're not entirely sure, and we don't have the capability to explore either, so that's why we sought cooperation with you, the Dragon King."

"Hmm."

Xiang Mantang acknowledged softly and fell into deep thought.

Could it really be the Garden of Eden?

He wasn't sure, but there was more than a seventy percent chance.

Of course, it could also be the great terror warned by the Omniscient Old Man, a catastrophe unseen in a million years!

Xiang Mantang wasn't too sure about that possibility either.

Currently, since he had completely failed to find any clues about the Garden of Eden and the clues provided by Paradise Lost were very close to what was described in the scriptures...

It was worth a try!

Take a gamble!

Having made up his mind, Xiang Mantang said, "Alright, let's give it a try, but we will go together."

"This..." Barlow hesitated, "We are just ordinary people, it's too dangerous there, we can't go. We have tried before, putting a transmitter and locator inside a fish and releasing it back into those two rivers, and it just disappeared."

He did not mention that they had also experimented with live humans who disappeared and never managed to send any messages back.

Xiang Mantang said, "No worries, I can protect you."

Saying this, he looked at Barlow with a half-smile, "You can't expect me to risk my life searching for the Garden of Eden for you while you just provide this mask and reap the benefits, right?"

"If we are going to die, we all die together!"

Hearing Xiang Mantang's words, Barlow and Leon's expressions changed several times before they finally gave a resigned sigh and nodded in agreement.

Afterward, Xiang Mantang put the mask back on and, holding the necks of the two men, walked on air toward the far end of the rivers.

He walked on the waves, but in Barlow's eyes, Xiang Mantang was running on the barren land.

If Xiang Mantang hadn't been holding them and had let them follow behind, they would have eventually lost him as he entered the folded space, and they would have been left behind.

Eventually, Xiang Mantang and the others slowly disappeared in the waves on this barren land.

As soon as the three disappeared, another person appeared on the banks of the Tigris River, looked toward the direction they had vanished, said something, and then left.

...

In the surging waves, Xiang Mantang held Barlow and Leon until he realized they had fully entered the folded space of the two rivers, then he let go of them.

"Ah!"

Upon being released by Xiang Mantang, Barlow and Leon, feeling the sense of weightlessness, suddenly screamed.

However, in the end, they did not fall into the water.

Instead, they stood on the water's surface as if on flat ground.

This naturally was done by Xiang Mantang using the Heaven and Earth Vital Energy to assist them.

This, too, was another test by Xiang Mantang.

From the moment he first encountered these two men from the Garden of Eden, he had never truly trusted them and had repeatedly tested them.

Like distributing the Fruit of Life, letting Barlow wear the mask first to enter the Garden of Eden together, and suddenly dropping them into the water to observe their reactions.

Xiang Mantang naturally wouldn't be foolish enough to fantasize about how they would divide the Fruit of Life even before entering the Garden of Eden.

This would be as foolish as seeing a beautiful woman and then fantasizing about what to name your future son.

Now, having entered these two rivers, he suddenly dropped them, and from their reactions, they really did not seem like award-winning actors.